

Temporary Delays in EIN Processing

Issue: On Jan. 2, taxpayers and their representatives started using a new toll-free telephone number to request an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The new number consolidates several numbers into one, although the IRS processes EIN requests at three IRS Centers. Customers have experienced busy signals, and responses to faxed or mailed EIN requests have taken longer than expected. Start-up issues, unexpected high demand and a backlog of requests led to the initial delays. The backlog stems from the last part of December 2001, when the system was down for end-of-the-year processing and no EINs could be issued.

Who's affected: Customers who have phoned, mailed or faxed an EIN request within the last few weeks.

What IRS is doing about the problem: The IRS regrets the delays and the agency is taking immediate steps to address the problem. The IRS is redirecting personnel to ensure that calls are answered timely. Customers should see significant improvement by Jan. 18, 2002. IRS employees are also working to resolve the backlog as quickly as possible, but it may take up to three weeks to get caught up.

What affected taxpayers should do: The IRS asks customers to wait three weeks before re-faxing or calling about their requests. This will help speed IRS processing of current requests and clear the existing backlog. The IRS does not send confirmations in response to faxed or mailed EIN requests.